



Board of Forestry Meeting

**March 19, 2019
Charlottesville, VA**

Convene Meeting, Call to Order:

The Board of Forestry meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman Worrell at the Headquarters Building in Charlottesville, VA. Chairman Worrell reminded the Board of the Anti-trust policy and the annual requirement to sign the acknowledgment form.

Roll Call:

Board of Forestry Members Present

Anne Beals, Don Bright, John Burke, III, Joel Cathey, Mike Hinchey, Beth Flippo-Hutchins, Ken Morgan Jr., Greg Scheerer, Dr. David Smith and Glen Worrell

Members Absent

Franklin Myers, Heather Richards and William Snyder

Recognition:

Secretary Bettina Ring and State Forester Rob Farrell presented new Board member Mike Hinchey with his appointment certificate and Ken Morgan with his reappointment certificate.

Adoption of Agenda:

A request to change the terminology under State Forester's Report-Discussion of changes related to the use of the term 'forestry' to 'forester' was made. Motion was made to approve the agenda as amended; seconded. All present were in favor.

Recognition of Guests and Visitors:

Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) Present

Rob Farrell, State Forester; Ed Zimmer, Deputy State Forester; Terry Lasher, Eastern Regional Forester; Michelle Stoll, Director of Public Information; Dean Cumbia, Director of Forest Resource Management; Todd Groh, Forest Resource Management Program Coordinator; Mary Weaver, Executive Assistant

Recognition of Guests and Visitors

Bettina Ring, Secretary of Agricultural and Forestry; Heidi Hertz, Assistant Agricultural and Forestry; Ron Jenkins, Virginia Loggers Association; Martha Moore, Virginia Farm Bureau; Susan Seward, Virginia Forest Products Association; Kurt Christensen, Landowner

Hearing of Citizens:

Kurt Christensen addressed his concerns with industrial solar facility installations. Solar farms are a big issue, a lot of land involved. What happens to land when they're decommissioned?

Ron Jenkins addressed his concerns with solar farms. Be diligent and thoughtful thinking about the future and lean towards biomass. Ron spoke about an effort to put logging under agricultural and the Brunswick County had its very first recognition of agriculture and timber.

The Board discussed solar farms and is there a long term impact analysis of use. Need to have a sense of responsibility for what happens in 20-30 years.

Chairman Worrell asked to move this discussion to a later time in the meeting.

Anne Beals arrived at 9:30

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made to approve the March 19, 2019 minutes as presented; seconded. All present were in favor.

Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry (SAF) Update:

Secretary Ring discussed the following:

- ◆ New carpet in the Headquarters building along with the solar panels on the roof of the building.
- ◆ Congratulated Rob on his growing leadership team and welcomed Terry Lasher as the new Assistant State Forester.
- ◆ Legislative and budget items;
 - VDOF received \$200,000 for broadband improvements.
 - The water quality improvement funding was doubled.
 - The positions requested were not approved.
- ◆ Virginia's silviculture is a good model for other states.
- ◆ John Burke is serving on the Chesapeake Bay Advisory Board.
- ◆ The Healthy Watershed Project is in the 3rd phase. A fund is being developed to help landowners for forest retention.
- ◆ Twenty-two AFID grants have been announced since Governor Northam's been in office. Seventeen in rural areas and five forestry projects.
- ◆ Environment of Virginia and VaULT Conferences coming up. Thanks VDOF for stepping up and being sponsors.
- ◆ Black Family Land Trust hired a forester and joined the SFI Board. Meeting with the Governor in reference to the Black Family Land Trust and Generation Next initiatives.
- ◆ The 2019 Virginia Governors Agricultural Trade Conference had over 300 in attendance with over 15 countries represented. Plan to have more emphasis on forestry next year.
- ◆ The USDA trade mission will be to Vietnam and Columbia this year.
- ◆ The Governor's trade mission will be to Paris.

State Forester's Report:

Rob Farrell reviewed with the Board agency updates:

- ◆ General Assembly went well thanks to Katie Hellebush for shepherding the Timber Theft language changes through and to all our stakeholders for staying committed and flexible.

- Timber Theft was approved as prepared with one change; dropping the penalty down from larceny to a misdemeanor. It will take effect July 1. VDOF is working on Policies and Procedures to help landowners navigate through those changes. Also working on a signing ceremony with our partners.
- The Forester titling bill passed.
- Received \$200,000 for broadband to address some of VDOF's internet connection issues.
- Double the amount of Water Quality Improvement Fund. Will receive after July 1.
- ◆ Board of Forestry procedures are on the agenda for approval. Thanks to Frank Meyers, Don Bright and Beth Flippo-Hutchins for their assistance on those.
- ◆ Completed the agency's strategic plan. Intended to be an operational strategic plan to help us make sure we are doing things as efficiently and effectively as we can.
- ◆ Just finished VDOF's water quality audit report. The audit found that 99.13 percent of harvests have no active sedimentation after harvest was completed. It's been a very wet year for Virginia, of all the Best Management Practices (BMPs) that could have been implemented VDOF is at 94 percent. Loggers have implemented BMPs as a part of doing business, audit report reflects that.
- ◆ Story of forestry in Virginia is good story.
 - Record harvesting.
 - Growing more wood than we're harvesting.
 - High levels of Water Quality protection.
- ◆ VDOF was successful in getting the Riparian Buffer grant for Virginia Environment Endowment. VDOF's approach to riparian buffers is to look at specific property and landowner and see what it would take to get a riparian buffer that meets the landowner's needs.
- ◆ This year is the 100th anniversary of our State Forests system.
- ◆ VDOF had their first timber sale under the Good Neighbor Authority off of National Forest Land.
- ◆ Hardwood meeting with 50 stakeholders will be held on April 3 to come up with some strategies to move forward on.
- ◆ Leadership Changes:
 - Ed Zimmer will be doing the chief of operations role as the deputy state forester.
 - Recreated the assistant state forester position from the chief of operations position, which Terry Lasher now fills. Terry will be over Urban and Community Forestry, Utilization, Marketing and Economic Development and Forestland Conservation.
 - Chief of Administration, Eastern Regional Forester and Western Deputy Regional Forester are in recruit.
 - Ed Stoots moved to State Lands Coordinator and Chris Thomsen has filled the Western Regional Forester position.
- ◆ This year is Smoke Bear's 75th Birthday. VDOF was fortunate enough to produce the VDOF Fire Prevention Calendar this year. Great response to the calendar and plan to have it again next year.
 - Highlight Magazine is doing a special edition on Smokey Bear's birthday.
- ◆ Will put BMP accomplishments out as a news release for forestry.

Changes related to the use of the term 'forester' and 'forestry'

House Bill 2341 - Forester Title; educational requirement

- ◆ Rob explained the reason and what legislative language was submitted to the General Assembly to amend the state code requirements on who can be called a state forester.
 - Current requirement is have a graduate degree from an accredited program by the Society of American Foresters.

- Added allowance to submit transcripts to the Society of American Foresters for them to determine if the requirements were met by the individual.
- The State Forester was excluded from the addition. The State Forester is still required to have graduated from an accredited school.
- The legislation was approved.

Forestry Camp name change

- ◆ Forestry Camp name was changed to Camp Woods and Wildlife to assist with bringing the attendance up.
- ◆ The change was to the title only, the camp program did not change.

Board discussed the concerns of the use of the terms 'Forester' and 'Forestry'.

- ◆ Mr. Morgan expressed his concern in regards to ensuring stakeholders are involved in the changes and will the connection to forestry be lost with the camp name change.
- ◆ The essence of forest management is what's important. Finding a term the public can connect with is more important than holding on to the term if that prevents us from getting the public to support management of our forest resources.
- ◆ Opportunity to educate the public on what forestry truly is.
- ◆ Rob shared an article from the Journal of Forestry, January 16th issue on a study of how people perceive the word 'forest'.
- ◆ We can change the way public perceives a word, change the word, or as the professionals hold solid to the words (forester, forestry) but when talking to the general public use words that the general public can understand and relate to (woods).
- ◆ In marketing use words that better resonate with the public like; woodlot, woodland, woods, stewardship.
- ◆ You can't have a discussion unless you have people. You have to have a marketing to get them in the room, once they're in the room you can have the discussion. Names of the programs have evolved to get people inside the room.
- ◆ Camp Woods and Wildlife is held in direct conflict with Future Farmers of America (FFA) Camp. This will be resolved for next year.
- ◆ Need to get school counselors and parents of kids who are interested in Natural Resources. FFA is no longer a main source of who attends camp.
- ◆ Important to understand how the Forestry title evolved.

Informational Items:

Seedling Survival Update

VDOF Deputy State Forester Ed Zimmer briefed the Board on the low seedling survival rate this year.

- ◆ Germination was low due to the amount of rain.
- ◆ There are 500,000 unsold seedlings.
- ◆ There was an excessive amount of mortality from last year's planting due to the extreme change in weather.

Board discussed the effects of too much rain to the seedling trees and the progress of the containerized longleaf.

Action Items:

Review of Policy and Procedure 01-003 Conduct of Board of Forestry Meetings

- ◆ Rob discussed the substantial changes of the Memo of Procedures to Policy and Procedure 01-003 Conduct of Board of Forestry Meetings.

- How many meetings we have and when we have them.
- Clarified use of electronic meetings. Only included the ability for individuals to attend electronically for cause. A medical issue or emergency that would prevent from physically attending the meeting.
- ◆ The Board discussed adding the description of 'four at large members' to the Establishment, Composition and General Conditions section. Final decision was to leave as it's written per Code of Virginia §10.1-1102
- ◆ How many meetings to have and when was discussed.
 - Meet in March to discuss RT and elect Chairman and Vice-Chairman.
 - Meet in spring or summer in conjunction with partner events.
 - Meet in fall to discuss legislation and budget.
- ◆ Research commonwealth requirements for quorum and insert into procedures.
- ◆ First meeting in March, Spring/Summer meeting and Fall meeting.

Paused meeting date discussion to address next action item. Rob will work on wording for the proposed meeting dates.

Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman

- ◆ The nomination committee comprised of Dr. Dave Smith and Greg Scheerer slated John Burke, III for Chairperson and Ken Morgan for Vice-Chairman.
- ◆ A motion was made to approve the slate as presented; seconded. All present were in favor.

Revisited the Policy and Procedures to discuss proposed wording for meeting dates.

- ◆ The meetings and dates will be determined by the Board as far in advance as practical for the benefit of the members and the Commonwealth's notification process. Proposed timeframe of meetings for each year will be:
 - First meeting of the year in March at VDOF Headquarters Office to recommend Reforestation of Timberland rates and elect officers.
 - Fall discussion meeting to focus on a selected topic(s), which may be held at a location related to the topic being discussed.
 - And at least one of the following meetings, preferably in conjunction with an association annual meeting or Expo Richmond:
 - Spring meeting in May or June.
 - Summer meeting in August or September
 - Additional meeting, if desired:
 - Winter legislation meeting held in December or January to discuss proposed legislation or budget items, which may be held in conjunction with Agribusiness Council banquet.
- ◆ Motion was made to accept 01-03 Policy and Procedures Conduct of Board of Forestry Meeting with changes indicated to dates; seconded. All present were in favor.
- ◆ Motion was made to accept 01-03 Policy and Procedures Conduct of Board of Forestry Meeting as amended with understanding that a quorum will be added as appropriate; seconded. All present were in favor.

Committee/Liaison Reports:

Reforestation of Timberlands (RT) Committee

Greg Scheerer shared with the Board the discussion at the RT committee meeting.

- ◆ RT committee had good discussion on rates and committee recommended no changes to rates were needed this year.

- ◆ Don Bright, requested information on what part of Hardwood is being harvested in the regions be a part of the RT report going forward. Don also suggested to look at the Virginia Code §10.1-1126.1 Silviculture practices to be understand the Best Management Practices (BMPs) better.

Hardwood Management Task Force

- ◆ John Burke reviewed with the Board the progress the Hardwood Management Task Force is making. Making great progress and moving forward. A meeting is scheduled on April 3, with many key representatives to discuss improving hardwood management for long term sustainability and health. Goal for this meeting is to have strategies identified and volunteers to work on this going forward.

Unfinished Business:

None

New Business:

- ◆ Chairman Worrell would like to see one of the future board meetings focus about solar and some facts on them.
- ◆ Susan Seward, Virginia Products Association, offered to get information from VaCO on what's in the law currently along with the amount of acreage that is currently has applications for solar farms.
- ◆ Board suggested to use the next few meetings to discuss and learn facts about solar. Would like to visit a solar development if possible.
- ◆ Kurt Christiansen, landowner, expressed his thoughts in regards to getting any research answer you want because of the money involved.
- ◆ Susan Seward, Virginia Products Association, talked about the applications that are in process at Sussex County, along with letter of interest for a 13,000 acre project and how the Board of Supervisors are handling it.
- ◆ Meet in May to discuss what the Boards role for solar development is.
- ◆ Don Bright inquired about tracking hardwood land that is being converted to pine plantations.
- ◆ Greg Scheerer mentioned that VDOT is changing where you are allowed to post your entrance permits for logging projects. They need to be posted at front of property. Concerned about them being stolen. VDOT doesn't seem to have consistency from one county to the next.

Schedule of Next Meeting:

VDOF Executive Assistant Mary Weaver will send out a doodle poll to schedule the next meeting for a day in either the week of May 13th or May 27th. Location will be either Richmond or Charlottesville.

Adjournment:

Chairman Worrell called for a motion to adjourn; motion was made to adjourn the March 19, 2019 meeting at 1:58 p.m. and seconded. All present were in favor.

Minutes recorded by Mary Weaver, Executive Assistant